

March 23, 2010

Mr. Tom Fulton, Chair
Alexandria Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park & Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group
c/o Ms. Laura Durham, Advisory Group Staff Coordinator
Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Mr. Fulton:

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission thanks you for the opportunity to comment upon the City of Alexandria's management of Fort Ward Park. The Commission at its March 16, 2010, meeting discussed your request for a statement.

The preservation, protection, and interpretation of the historic resources of Fort Ward Park should be the primary consideration in the formulation of any plans for the future of Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, as listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

HARC recognizes the legitimate and rightful needs of the citizens of Alexandria for appropriate recreational space and facilities. Nevertheless, the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission places on record its considered view that the protection and preservation of the historic character of Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site and its ability to offer exhibits, education and interpretive programs, tours and other related activities not be compromised in any way. The members noted the historic significance of Fort Ward in citing the following:

- ❑ Fort Ward is the best preserved of the system of Union forts and batteries built to protect Washington, D.C. during the American Civil War.
- ❑ Native American presence is confirmed through archaeological evidence.
- ❑ African Americans supported the Union cause during the Civil War and subsequently settled the area, working in the community and living at Fort Ward.
- ❑ African American citizens were interred at Fort Ward in several family plots.
- ❑ Archaeological and cultural resources are abundant throughout the park as defined by the National Register of Historic Places.

We appreciate the work of the Advisory Group and look forward to the results of your effort on behalf of the City of Alexandria.

Sincerely,

Ellen F. Stanton, Chair
Historic Alexandria Resources Commission